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Information and communications technologies for development

Thailand:* draft resolution

Information and communications technologies for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004, 60/252 of 27 March 2006, 62/182 of 19 December 2007, 63/202 of 19 December 2008, 64/187 of 21 December 2009, 65/141 of 20 December 2010, 66/184 of 22 December 2011, 67/195 of 21 December 2012, 68/198 of 20 December 2013, 69/204 of 19 December 2014 and 70/184 of 22 December 2015,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/46 of 28 July 2006, 2008/3 of 18 July 2008, 2009/7 of 24 July 2009, 2010/2 of 19 July 2010, 2011/16 of 26 July 2011, 2012/5 of 24 July 2012, 2013/9 of 22 July 2013, 2014/27 of 16 July 2014 and 2015/26 of 22 July 2015, and taking note of Council resolution 2016/22 of 27 July 2016 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

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building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Recalling the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[1] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[2] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[3] and endorsed by the Assembly,[4]

Recalling also the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,[5] held in New York on 15 and 16 December 2015, in which it took stock of the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit, addressed potential information and communications technology gaps and identified areas for continued focus,

Reaffirming the World Summit on the Information Society vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, recognizing that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing new technologies, stressing the need to address prevailing challenges to bridge the digital divide, both between and within countries and between women and men, and harness information and communications technologies for development, and recalling the need to emphasize quality of access to bridge digital and knowledge divides, using a multidimensional approach that includes speed, stability, affordability, language, local content and accessibility for persons with disabilities,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels,[6]

Noting the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum, jointly organized annually by the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations

[1] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.
[2] See resolution 59/220.
[3] See A/60/687.
[4] See resolution 60/252.
[5] Resolution 70/125.
[6] A/71/67-E/2016/51 and Corr.1.

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Development Programme,

Noting also the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and taking note of the report of the Broadband Commission entitled *The State of Broadband 2016: Broadband Catalysing Sustainable Development*, which provides an evaluation of the progress made towards achieving the Commission's targets for broadband and the state of broadband development worldwide, and the report of the special session of the Commission, entitled "Working together to connect the next 1.5 billion by 2020", in which the Commission noted that less than half the world's population is currently connected to the Internet and fewer than 1 in 10 people in least developed countries are connected,

Noting further the call for the continuation of annual reports on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to the Economic and Social Council, and reaffirms the role of the Commission, as set forth in Council resolution 2006/46, in assisting the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit,

Noting the holding of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Geneva from 9 to 13 May 2016,

Noting also the references to information and communications technologies contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

Recognizing the fact that information and communications technologies are critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare, and that the increasing pervasiveness of information and communications technologies within society has had profound impacts on the ways in which Governments deliver services, businesses relate to consumers and citizens participate in public and private life,

Stressing, however, that recent progress notwithstanding, there remains an important and growing digital divide between developed and developing countries in terms of the availability, affordability and use of information and communications technologies and access to broadband, and stressing also the need to close the digital divide, including with regard to such issues as the affordability of the Internet, and ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all,

Reaffirming that the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society related to Internet governance, namely, the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, and recognizing that the two processes may be complementary,

Welcoming the efforts undertaken by the host countries in organizing the meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens in 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007, in Hyderabad, India, in 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, in Vilnius in 2010, in Nairobi in 2011, in Baku in 2012, in Bali, Indonesia, in 2013, in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2014, and in João Pessoa, Brazil, in 2015, and the meeting to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 6 to 9 December 2016,

Conscious of the challenges faced by States, in particular developing countries, in combating the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, including by terrorists, and emphasizing the need to reinforce technical assistance and capacity-building activities, at their request, for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of such use in accordance with international law,

Stressing the importance of inclusiveness within the United Nations development system and that no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, trade and development, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

2. *Also recognizes* the potential of information and communications technologies to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[7] and other internationally agreed development goals, noting that they can accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, accordingly urges all Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders to integrate information and communications technologies into their approaches to implementing the Goals, going beyond connectivity to Internet and mobile infrastructure to include capacity-building, affordability and relevance, and requests United Nations entities facilitating the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society to review their reporting and workplans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

3. *Further recognizes* the importance of the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, as a means to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

4. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among relevant stakeholders, taking into account their respective roles and responsibilities to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva[1] and Tunis[3] phases of the World Summit on the Information Society;

[7] Resolution 70/1.

5. *Notes* the progress that has been made by United Nations entities in cooperation with national Governments, regional commissions and other relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society, and encourages the use of those action lines for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

6. *Also notes* that the digital economy is an important and growing part of the global economy and that connectivity is correlated with increases in gross domestic product, recognizes the critical importance of expanding the participation of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the digital economy, and welcomes initiatives such as "eTrade for All", launched at the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in Nairobi from 17 to 22 July 2016, which provides a new approach to trade development through electronic exchanges by allowing developing countries to more easily navigate the supply of technical assistance for building capacity in e-commerce readiness and by enabling donors to have a clear picture of the programmes that they could fund;

7. *Recognizes* that the progress achieved in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society has been uneven and that serious challenges remain around the world, in this regard expresses concern about the critical digital and broadband divides that exist between developed and developing countries, including the fact that 30 per cent of the population in developing countries has access to mobile broadband connectivity, compared with 85 per cent in developed countries, and urges all relevant stakeholders to address the growing digital divides between and within countries through, among other actions, strengthened enabling policy environments at all levels and international cooperation to improve affordability, education, capacity-building, technology transfer on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and appropriate financing, with a continued focus on pro-poor policies on information and communications technology, including access to broadband at the grass-roots level;

8. *Also recognizes* that a gender-related digital divide exists as part of the digital divide, with 40.8 per cent of women having access to the Internet, compared with 45.9 per cent of men, encourages all relevant stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to new technologies, including information and communications technologies for development, in this respect reiterates its request for relevant United Nations entities, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to support the implementation and monitoring of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society by placing a new emphasis on gender, and reaffirms the commitment to ensure women's full participation in decision-making processes related to information and communications technologies;

9. *Notes* the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level, facilitated by the regional commissions, as observed in the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels;[6]

10. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates and strategic plans, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the importance of allocating adequate resources in this regard;

11. *Acknowledges* the extension of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum for another 10 years, as set out in the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;[5]

12. *Takes note* of the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum,[8] and requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels, information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group, in particular those on enhancing the participation of developing countries;

13. *Stresses* the need for the enhanced participation of Governments and relevant stakeholders from all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in all meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, and in this regard invites Member States, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to support the participation of Governments and all other relevant stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings;

14. *Notes* the proposal by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the structure and composition of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/125 of 16 December 2015, and notes the ongoing work of the Working Group to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, and in this regard stresses the need for the Working Group to enable the full involvement of all States, in particular developing countries;

15. *Recognizes* the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome the digital divide, and stresses that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;[9]

16. *Also recognizes* the importance of assisting developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to address the challenges and opportunities in relation to the use of the Internet and e-commerce to develop their international trade capacities, among other things;

17. *Further recognizes* that a lack of access to affordable and reliable technologies and services remains a critical challenge in many developing countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing

[8] A/67/65-E/2012/48 and Corr.1.

[9] Resolution 69/313, annex.

countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries, as well as countries and peoples under foreign occupation, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by natural disasters, and that all efforts should be deployed to reduce the price of information and communications technologies and broadband access, bearing in mind that deliberate interventions, including through research and development and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, may be necessary to spur the development of lower-cost connectivity options;

18. *Notes* the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and recognizes that official development assistance and other concessional financial flows for information and communications technology can make significant contributions to development outcomes, in particular where they can reduce the risk of public and private investment, and increase the use of information and communications technology to strengthen good governance and tax collection;

19. *Welcomes* the holding of the inaugural Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development, takes note of its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations, looks forward to further advancement in the follow-up process, also welcomes the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, the progress made in operationalizing the three components of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the holding of the inaugural multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, and stresses the need for the continued development, transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

20. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the review process of the World Summit on the Information Society, the summary by the Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals[10] and other relevant processes, as part of his annual report on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels;

22. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session the item entitled "Information and communications technologies for sustainable development".

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[10] E/HLPF/2016/6.